

Madam Chair, I represent a district with a long and proud history of manufacturing that goes all the way back to Alexander Hamilton and the birth of the American industry in Paterson, New Jersey. Sadly, we have seen the steady decline of our manufacturing base in America as the state of our competitiveness has fallen behind foreign nations.

The MEP program, the Manufacturing Extension Program, is one of the most successful programs funded by the Federal Government today, and it has provided hope to our Nation's manufacturers. It is a nationwide network of not-for-profit centers in nearly 350 locations, serving all 50 States and Puerto Rico, whose sole purpose is to provide small- and medium-sized manufacturers with the services they need for success.

The president of the New Jersey Manufacturing Extension Program, Bob Loderstedt, captures this program best when he said, "We have a public sector mission accomplished with a private sector mind-set."

I am proud to say that this legislation today will increase funding by 8 percent per year and double the funding over 10 years, so that more small manufacturers will be able to better compete in the global marketplace.

The MEP is certainly no Federal handout. Indeed, it is a public-private partnership for strong manufacturing growth, and these statistics bear this out: In fiscal year 2004 alone, MEP activities directly resulted in almost \$2 billion in new sales and more than 12,000 jobs. MEP's ability to analyze the weaknesses of each manufacturer resulted in \$721 million in cost savings. It also led to \$941 million worth of investment and modernization to meet the future needs of manufacturers.

I have seen firsthand the benefits of the New Jersey MEP as provided for manufacturers, and similar throughout the entire Nation. I believe that this is a very wise investment for us, and we can secure our Nation's manufacturing base. I urge my colleagues from both sides of the aisle to vote in favor of this vital legislation.

In conclusion, Madam Chair, let me say this. I think this is the beginning of finally having a manufacturing policy in this country. That is why we have seen the demise of manufacturing. Alexander Hamilton was right, we have a multifaceted economy; and we must understand, that won the battle and the debate with Thomas Jefferson. We cannot be one economy here. This is a multifaceted economy, and this is good for manufacturing, this is good for America, this is good for our small businesses.

Mr. EHLERS. Madam Chair, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WU. Madam Chair, I yield 2½ minutes to the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. MURPHY).

Mr. MURPHY of Connecticut. Madam Chair, my thanks to my friend, Mr. WU, for leading this debate today. I rise

today in strong support of H.R. 1868, the Technology Innovation and Manufacturing Stimulation Act.

The time has come for our country as a whole to stop ceding progress in science and technology to our competitors overseas. As one of the younger Members of this Chamber, I know that it is this generation's responsibility to keep our country competitive with countries like Japan, China, and India, whose young scientists and engineers are making new technological discoveries every day.

H.R. 1868 is part of the Speaker's Innovation Agenda to address how the United States should create a new generation of innovative thinkers and an educated, skilled workforce in science, math, engineering, and information technology. This bill makes a sustained commitment to Federal research and development, and will promote private sector innovation and provide small businesses with the tools to encourage entrepreneurial innovation and job creation throughout the country.

The Innovation Agenda is of particular importance to me as the Representative to Connecticut's Fifth District. We used to be the vanguard of manufacturing in the Fifth District; it is the home of Stanley Tool, of Scoville Brass, Torrington Ball Bearing Company, the fashioner of ball bearings where my grandfather and great-grandfather worked.

The days of those large manufacturing plants, at least in the Fifth Congressional District, are days of the past. However, my district now stands at the precipice of a new manufacturing era.

As I travel around my district, I am struck by how many small, high-tech manufacturers are setting up shop in this corner of the world. For example, in Torrington, high-tech companies are sprouting up on the grounds of the former Torrington Ball Bearing plant. In Danbury, in the shadow of a deserted hat manufacturing plant, a company that specializes in homeland security devices is growing. And in Waterbury, at an old brass factory, Luvata is making wire for an international consortium creating the world's first nuclear fusion device.

These small manufacturers are struggling every day with rising electricity costs and a lack of qualified workers to fill their growing job demands. This is why the Manufacturing Extension Partnership program, a national network of local centers that are set up to help these small manufacturers, are so critical to my district and districts like mine. This program is an effective public-private partnership that helps to leverage State and Federal dollars into private investment funds for these smaller manufacturers.

The importance of small manufacturers to America cannot be overstated. It is these small manufacturing plants where the most innovative work is being done. That is why I am so proud

of where the Fifth District stands as it is ready to lead in this new era.

Lastly, I just would like to voice my support for the Baldrige National Quality Program, named for former Commerce Secretary Malcolm Baldrige. The awards given by the President to businesses that live by Mr. Baldrige's strong belief and quality of performance standards, his widow, Midge Baldrige of Woodbury, Connecticut, and a friend. It is an honor to represent her.

I thank the gentleman for the time, I thank his efforts on this measure, and I urge passage this afternoon here in the House.

Mr. EHLERS. Madam Chair, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Chair, I reiterate my strong support of H.R. 1868, the Technology Innovation and Manufacturing Stimulation Act.

This bill is a key part of the President's American competitive initiative, and I am pleased it moved through the Science and Technology Committee in a bipartisan manner, and also moved through speedily.

I thank the staff for their hard work on this bill, including Jenny Healy from Dr. GINGREY's office and Julia Jester from my office. I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 1868.

Madam Chair, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. WU. Madam Chair, I also urge support for H.R. 1868. As I am frequently fond of saying, if you don't set standards for things, things don't match up. If you can't measure things, it is not real from a technologic or economic perspective.

The underlying legislation is crucial to America's competitiveness and our place in the world market.

Mr. MATHESON. Madam Chairman, I would like to compliment my friend, Chairman WU. He has been a tireless advocate for America's manufacturers and businesses and this bill will be a great benefit to our Nation's workforce. I appreciate working with the Chairman to include language in H.R. 1868 for a pilot program that, among other things, better enables the transfer of technology based on the technological needs of manufacturers and available technologies from institutions of higher education, laboratories, and other technology producing entities.

The Manufacturing Extension Partnership Competitive Grant Program described in Section 203(c) of H.R. 1868 is intended to, in addition to traditional manufacturing extension activities, emphasize the need to develop MEP projects that define the technological needs of small-to-medium sized manufacturers and to similarly define the capabilities of new technology and innovations available from institutions of higher education, laboratories, and other technology producing entities. When properly defined and characterized, manufacturers and innovators will have the ability, through computer technology or other means, to match needs with capabilities. I believe that the development and deployment of this matching capability by this Competitive Grant Program will permit access to new and maturing technologies for the 350,000 small-to-medium-sized manufacturers on a broad basis, which has not been possible to date.